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DeAnn Hill, CPA, PFS, CGMA

Owner: DeAnn Auman Hill, CPA

Baxter Springs, KS

www.deannhillcpa.com

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The accounting profession has so many opportunities that are yours for the taking. Set your sights, make a plan, go forth and conquer. There are truly no limitations. If public accounting is your calling, the firms in this country are all so different—not just by size, locale or specialty—culture, gender makeup, flexible scheduling, paperless—whatever you find to be appealing. Just do yourself one favor—be happy and content wherever you are. You are the only who can make a choice to make your personal situation better.

If you were asked as a consultant to give advice to firms, would you have any recommendations on things they could do to better retain and advance more qualified female staff?

In my opinion, 2 things are so important. Firm culture—-a balanced culture that has professional activities, opportunities, benefits, dress code, support system, mentoring, etc. that are available and geared to both genders. This levels the playing field. It provides a great working environment for all to be at their best. Pathways—definitive career ladders that is known to all within the firm.

This should define what it takes to retain present positions, advance, retool or what other opportunities are available within the firm. Don't keep this information hidden. This allows all staff to make their own, educated choices on career path. It is not a moving target based on individual perceptions. There needs to be an ongoing conversation between partners and staff regarding personal pathways. It helps to manage expectations on both sides.

Do you think that there is still a glass ceiling in accounting firm senior management and partner levels, or that the profession has moved to a mostly gender neutral state?

The barriers have definitely been altered, but not completely shattered. I believe at

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My personal situation is a little different than most. I started my own CPA firm in 1985 at 25 years old. I truly did not realize there was an issue. The phrase "glass ceiling" has not been discussed much. I thought being young and female was something new for the profession and would be welcomed.

Since I was a sole practitioner, my potential clients new up front who I was and what I brought to the table. Personally, I can say I have not had the challenges I know many have had to endure.

What solutions have you found successful in managing work-life integration. the balancing of your career with your personal, family and social life?

One of the biggest keys in my practice, is a piece of my client selection process. I find it best when I work with client/family groups that have similar personal/family/social values as I do. Their expectations of me do not compromise my personal expectations.

For example, if I had a sick child, they would never think less of me, nor expect me to put my family responsibilities at the bottom of the priority list. Of course, I work very diligently for them to ensure I do not put their needs/priorities at risk. It is a two way street. I believe that is what great client relationships are made of—mutual respect and understanding whether it be professionally or personally.

How mobile are you regarding your work? How have mobile devices and apps impacted your productivity and work-life balance? (Spending less time in the office?)

I can work from anywhere. Seriously. I love it. It seems I am always somewhere. It is so nice when you do get back to the office—the desk, inbox, messages are not stacked so high. Mobility has allowed me to make my time so much more productive thereby increasing my down time. My work/life has always been more a dual approach...

minimize time spent on work to maximize life time. It ebbs and flows with the busy

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I text myself messages often, especially when out of the office. This then serves as my to do list, reminders of important things people share with me, or just trivia that I want to remember. It could be my need for a GPS, to get the latest airline change information, Pandora for a rental car that the radio doesn't work....the uses go on and on !!!

What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?

Mypc.com It allows me to be anywhere I need to be anytime I am needed or I have the need.

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